

Town of Dryden

Elsie Gutchess

Town of Dryden Historian

Dryden. The Town of Dryden was surveyed in 1790 by John Konkle and numbered Township No. 23 of the Military Tract and then named Dryden for the English poet, John Dryden. Settlement in Dryden began with the arrival of Amos Sweet in 1797. Others who followed held the first town meeting on March 1, 1803, at the home of Captain George Robertson on the Bridle Road at the corner of Baker Hill Road, where the Plantation Inn is now located. On February 23, 1803, the township of Dryden was set off separately and located in Cayuga County.

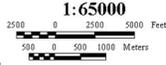
When Tompkins County was formed on April 7, 1817, the state removed Dryden from Cayuga County and it became part of the new county. On January 1, 1887, lots 94–100 were taken from the southern border of Dryden and transferred to the Town of Caroline. Dryden currently contains 94 square miles of land. The Town of Dryden has the most miles of roads of any town in the county and, according to the town Highway Superintendent Report of December 2001, 162 of them are named.

Beam Hill Road was established sometime before 1850, running from the Lake Road, up the hill to the home of the Beem family, the road name having been misspelled. By the 1860s, it was extended over the hill and down to Irish Settlement Road, and its western end was called

Town of Dryden

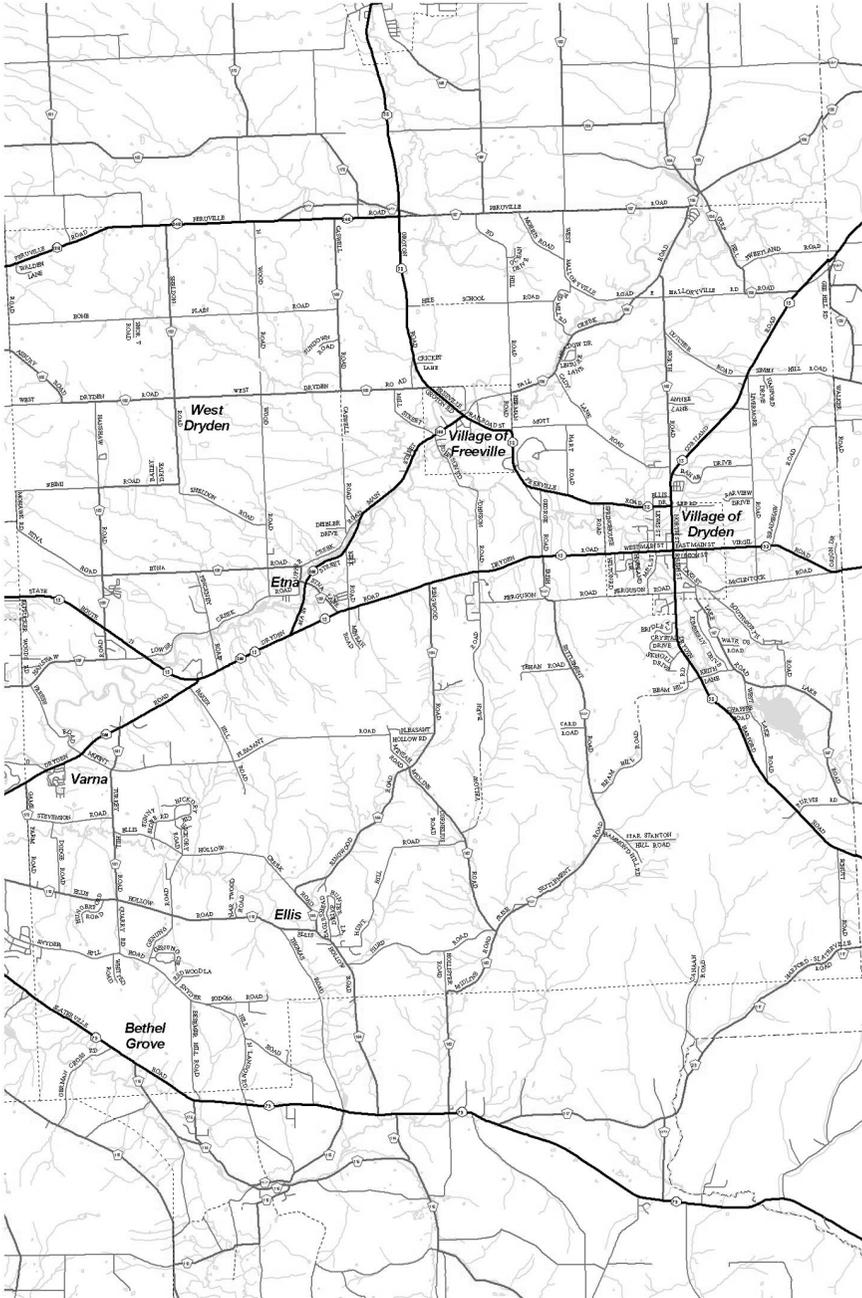


New York State Plane Central
1983 North American Datum



Tompkins County
Information Technology Services
GIS Division

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Thomas Road. In 1978, the center part of the road was closed. Now it is open again as Beam Hill Road. The lower, eastern end of that road was changed to Dug Road and Keith Lane.

Besemer is a family name (Beseman) that first appeared on the 1853 map of Dryden. *See also Besemer in the Town of Caroline.*

Bethel Grove is located on the Slaterville Road. The word bethel means a hallowed spot, or a dissenting chapel for non-sectarian worship. This, together with its situation in a fine grove of trees, may have been the genesis of the name Bethel Grove.

Bone Plain Road began as West Washington Road. The name changed in the early 1900s. Karl Koistenin states that in the early years of the twentieth century horses had died in the area and their bones were left on the ground. In addition, according to resident Norm VanTine, the land was flat and barren, resembling a plain with stones that also resembled bones.

California was listed in directories of 1860 and 1879 and on town maps as the crossing of Yellow Barn and Midline roads. It was supposed to have received this name, commented Iva Cornelius VanPelt (1904–2001) “from a group of pioneers whose original goal had been that far-western state (the 1849 California gold rush), but who so liked the Hollow that they decided to remain here instead.”

Canaan Valley, also called the “Happy Land of Canaan,” is in the southeast corner of the town, the portion deeded in 1887 to the Town of Caroline. The next valley to the west was called Sodom (sod’-um) and was possibly named from the Bible. Most of that area is now State and Federal land.

Chicahominy Road was once Farrell Road. During the Depression of the 1930s, according to an interview with Peter DeBruyan (1926–2001),

chickens and hominy were what the residents of that area had to eat. By the 1970s it changed again to West Dryden Road/Route 108. In the Town of Lansing, the explanation for Chicahominy is somewhat different. *See Chicahominy in the Town of Lansing.*

Dodge Road appears on an 1853 map and is named for the Reverend Dodge, a Snyder Hill minister known to be in the town in 1824. The widow Dodge was the occupant of the only house on the road. (So shouldn't it be Widow Dodge Road?)

Dryden, Village of. *See Village of Dryden at the end of this section.*

Dryden Lake is actually a branch of Virgil Creek. In 1803, James Lacy built a dam that caused the nearby area to form a millpond first known as "Little Lake." Dryden Lake is one mile long and one-half mile wide and 1,500 feet above sea level. The lake and its surrounding area were developed for the Town of Dryden's Bicentennial Celebration in 1997 when the area became known as "Dryden Lake Park." In 2001, the park trail was renamed "Grampa Schug's Trail," for Town Commissioner James Schug.

In 1853, a road ran from Griswold's Mill, off the Lake Road, northerly to McLean. Some parts of it were called Livermore Road and Gulf Hill Road. By 1890, the road was gone. In 1971, a small section of the southern end of this road reopened as Watros Road for the family living nearby. That name disappeared from the maps created in 1971 and 1982, but returned in the 1987 map and is still here today. What now is referred to as Lake Road or Route 157 was earlier called East Lake Road in the 1950s and Tripp Road.

Dusenberry Hollow was named for the many Dusenberry families who lived nearby. The name was later corrupted to Dusenbury.

Ellis Hollow was named for its first settler, Peleg Ellis, who arrived in 1799. Ellis located his acres in the endless forest with the aid of a map,

and marked trees indicating the surveyed boundaries. He found his lot and immediately began chopping out a clearing. Eleven days later, Zephaniah Brown appeared. He had settled nearby, and hearing the sound of the axe came to call upon his new neighbor. A post office was established in 1880 under the name of Ellis Hollow. Hollow was dropped from the name in 1882, and the post office was discontinued August 30, 1902.

Several of the earliest roads in the Ellis Hollow area and identified on the 1850–1860 maps were named after the first settlers: Hurd Road, Thomas Road (now Route 110), and Hunt Road (Hunt Hill Road). *See also* Ringwood Road.

Ellis Hollow Creek Road was known originally as Creek Road before the 1960s and as Back Road even earlier. In *Ellis Hollow Lore* (1962), Z. M. Pritchard wrote that Zephaniah Brown had cleared a road from his place to Ithaca in 1799, and that two years later Peleg Ellis and Brown extended the road into the Ellis Hollow neighborhood.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Curtis G. Lloyd of Ohio, whose son John Thomas “Sam” Lloyd was a graduate student at Cornell, donated 114 acres of swamp and wetlands to preserve these fragile areas. Known today as the Ringwood Preserve, the land is managed by Cornell University. The Lloyds called them the “Lloyd-Cornell Reservations,” though that name is rarely used anymore.

By 2001, several parcels of land donated to the Finger Lakes Land Trust, became the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve of 111 acres.

Etna is a hamlet on Fall Creek, which began in 1800 as Miller’s Settlement. It was named for the Miller brothers, the first settlers to arrive in the area. With abundant waterpower available from Fall Creek, many small industries developed which soon made the little community a busy spot. In 1815, Miller sold out and went west. From then until 1823, the community was called Columbia. When the post office was established, the name was listed as Etna, said to have been suggested by the presence of several distilleries that burned pine knots

and stumps to create a hot fire. Their chimneys belched flames and smoke which local residents likened to the eruptions of Mount Etna. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Etna had a reputation for horse running and liquor distilleries, there being ten to twelve stills within two square miles.

Fox's Corners. *See* West Dryden.

Freeville, Village of. *See* **Village of Freeville** *at the end of this section.*

Freeville Road/Route 38 was first known as Wheeler Road, named for Deacon Wheeler, who settled in 1804 on lands one mile north of Dryden Village.

Gee Hill was named for John Gee, a Revolutionary War soldier who came to Dryden around the year 1796.

Genung Corners and **Genung Road** were both named for early settler Jacob Peter Genung. About 1950 development nearby created new road names: Beechnut Terrace, Hickory Road and Circle, Lone Oak Road, Sunny Knoll Road, and Sunny Slope and Sunny Terrace. Other newer area roads include Brooktree Lane, Deer Run, Eagleshead Road, Hartwood Road, Hickory Road Circle, Hunters Lane, Knoll Tree Road, Peaceful Drive, and Woodland Road, all of which evoke a pastoral area even as those acres became built up.

George Junior Republic is a residence for young people in need of structure and supervision. It was created in 1890 by W. R. "Daddy" George who brought 22 boys from New York City to Freeville for the summer. By 1895 he had acquired 43 acres for his school, much of it the Oliver Cady farm, and he advertised his organization the "Smallest Republic in the World." The student residents were children with problems or needing supervision. GJR has grown to over 500 acres with 22 buildings. Currently it serves about 150 boys placed there through various state programs.

George Road honors the George families who were among the first pioneers in this area, arriving in 1804.

Gilesville was named for the Isiah Giles family who arrived 1806, but due to a dubious land title, moved from Etna further down Fall Creek to just above Varna and again built a home and mill. The area soon became known as Gilesville Mills and the area as Gilesville.

Hammond Hill State Forest was named for the Hammond family who were early residents of the area. The forest spans 3,618 acres and was established between 1935 with the work of men in the Civilian Conservation Corps through the 1950s.

Hibbards Corners was a community located at the crossing of the Ellis Hollow and Turkey Hill roads on the 1853 map. The Henry Hibbard family arrived in 1812. In 1828, Hibbard joined with Jeremiah S. Beebe to construct the Clinton House, a grand hotel in Ithaca which is still standing.

Irish Settlement was originally known as South Hill but in 1811, a party of emigrants, including the Teers Brothers from Ireland, arrived giving the hill a new name. The earliest north-south paths in the area followed an Iroquois trail, the boundary line between the Cayugas and the Onondagas. The first missionaries traveled this trail in 1745, guided by Indians.

Ithaca-Oxford Turnpike/Route 13 was the first road commissioned by New York State in 1792, running westerly from Oxford, a distance of about sixty miles, to Cayuga Lake. Earlier the Iroquois had used this route as a footpath, and it is said that Joseph Chaplin, who was hired by the state to create a road, only cleared the fallen trees and brush, and cut out some lower branches for his pay. The way was rough and the earliest pioneers could not ride astride their horses as the very dense and giant white pine and hemlock branches had only been trimmed near the ground. Travelers leading their horses had to follow

the blazed trees. Soon the turnpike was known far and wide as the Bridle Path.

Kingdom Road is named for the Jehovah Witnesses' Kingdom Farm first appearing on a town map in 1978.

Lacey Corners is a crossroad one mile north of Dryden Village, near the entrance to the Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). It was named for the J. R. Lacey family who lived and farmed there.

Lost Road, true to its name, is an elusive road. It was a short road running from the Harford Road in the far southeast corner of the town. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, this road was on and off the maps. Lost Road now appears to be lost again.

Malloryville was already a little community when Samuel Mallory arrived and bought the mill in 1825. At that time, the community took Mallory's name. He built other mills along the creek and gave employment to as many as 40 people. In 1836 a great fire burned everything. Mallory sold out and went west. Later owners rebuilt the mills, but they burned again in 1855 and 1875. The area was listed as a hamlet in 1860. The last of the mills was torn down in the early 1900s.

Monkey Run Road was first named around 1850. In 1958 it was called Drunkers Run. Some old timers commented that this was a place people would go for romantic encounters, or where "people monkeyed around."

Ocean Drive first appeared on the 1978 town map with no name. In 1982 the map clearly labels it Olean Drive but in 1985 it was again Ocean Drive, and it is Ocean Drive today.

Old Dryden Road was originally the Cortland Road, often a trouble spot because of deep snow or water overflowing from Beaver Creek.

When Route 13 was widened and repaved in the mid-1940s, the cut was straightened and moved higher up on the west bank. It was first called Old Dryden Hill Road.

The Punch Bowls are geological formations dating from the glacial era and are bounded by Mott, Cady, and Fall Creek roads. They have long been mined for their rich gravel deposits.

Red Mill was built in 1807 by Isaac Ogden and was in continuous operation for 130 years or until 1938, when the dam went out, destroying its source of power. The brightly painted Red Mill was a landmark for many generations and gave its name to the area.

Ringwood Road. There is a legend concerning the origin of the name Ringwood Road (Route 164) that comes from an interview with Iva Cornelius Van Pelt (1904–2001). She remembered that her grandfather told of the “ringing sounds that echoed through the woods made by the men with their axes as they cleared the hills that circled the little settlement of Ellis Hollow.” Thus the “ringing woods.”

Sapsucker Woods and Sapsucker Woods Road as place names can be dated to 1909 when Arthur A. Allen, professor of ornithology, and Louis Agassez Fuertes, talented and well-known bird illustrator, identified a yellow-bellied sapsucker in the woods. The road was developed after 1957 when Cornell University built Lyman Ornithology Laboratory at the end of the road, along with some other facilities, one for dogs and another for mink. In 2003 Cornell University opened its modern Laboratory of Ornithology, somewhat changing the configuration of the road with a new entrance from Route 13.

The Six Hundred refers to a 600-acre mountainous forest of virgin softwoods 150 feet tall, located on very steep hills north of the Sodom and Canaan Valleys in the southeast corner of the town. It was a popular nesting site for the now extinct passenger pigeons. Before the

Civil War, part of the area was owned by wealthy New York abolitionist, Gerrit Smith of Peterboro. He had plans of owning an escape pathway the entire length of the state and into Canada for the use of fleeing southern slaves.

Snyder Hill Road was named for the Jacob Snyder family, who arrived in the spring of 1801 and soon owned several large tracts of land in the area.

Sodom Road can be found on the 1853 map as a lane to one home, but the Sodom (sow'-dum) family did not live there until c. 1930s.

Stafford Road originally ran north to Cortland County. It is now known as Lilac Lane.

Star Stanton Road and **Star Stanton Hill** run from Irish Settlement Road to the Dryden–Harford Road. Starr Stanton (1850–1920) was a resident of Dryden who held many village offices. He also wrote for a newspaper edited by William Jennings Bryan. The Stanton family lived up on the hill in 1868.

Tompkins Cortland Community College was organized in 1966 in Groton. In 1970 the college moved to its new facility on 220 acres of the old Albright, or Portzline farm on the edge of the Village of Dryden.

Turkey Hill Road, now Route 161, was originally a main north-south route. Oldtimers recalled that the name came from the drovers who walked flocks of turkeys to market, letting them feed and sleep at night in the beechnut forest on that hill.

Varna is a hamlet settled in 1800 by Isaac Varna and others. By 1803 Gabriel Cain had built a mill using the power of Fall Creek. The Varna Post Office operated from 1833 to November 1918.

Von Engeln Nature Preserve. In 2001, the Nature Conservancy opened the 308-acre area named O. D. von Engeln Nature Preserve with its entrance on West Malloryville Road. Von Engeln was a professor of geology at Cornell University in the early years of the twentieth century and is known for his books about the geography and culture of the area. See in particular *Concerning Cornell*, published in 1917, which contains two essays about the geography of the county.

Watros Road began in 1853 as an unnamed path leading to McLean. Parts of it were called Livermore Road and other parts Gulf Hill Road. By 1890 the road was gone. In 1971 the southern end reopened as Watros Road. Between 1972 and 1981 the road was again missing, but it reappears on the 1987 map and has been noted each year ever since.

Werninckville, located along Route 366, was created in 1950 by Lionel Werninck who opened the area for both business and homes. Private streets, named for his family, are Kirby Drive and Sheryl Drive.

West Dryden was settled in 1804, by Samuel Fox, a Revolutionary War veteran who brought his family into the northwest corner of the town that became known as Fox's Corners. The post office department rejected the name because there was a Fox's Corners elsewhere in the state, so the post office was established under the name West Dryden. Well into the early 1900s, however, the hamlet was still commonly called Fox's Corners. The post office was discontinued in June 1902. During its pioneer period (1816–1840) the little settlement was a business place of some importance. In 1860 the population was 93.

West Dryden Road. In the mid-1950s, the central section of the West Dryden Road was known as Zeman Road.

Willow Glen was first inhabited by a group of fourteen persons who came west with one yoke of oxen and a sled in 1798. It was known for a time as Stickle Corners, for one family of the group. For 50 years,

this community rivaled Dryden Corners in size and industry. About 1850, resident Huldah Phillips named it Willow Glen because of the nearby willow trees along the banks of Virgil Creek. Willow Glen Cemetery, once a meeting place for the Iroquois, became a cemetery as early as 1816, on land claimed by Aaron Lacey on his arrival in 1799. The cemetery was enlarged in 1864 for the returned Civil War dead.

Wood Road is named for the family of Mary Ann Wood Cornell, wife of Ezra, and was first called Trotting Park Road. In the 1970s, a beaver colony made dams and flooded the area and the town was forced to abandon the center section of the road.

Yellow Barn Road was named for the large barn located near the top of the hill. The Yellow Barn State Forest covers a large part of this area now. In 1960s, farm owner C. W. “Hap” Sadd and his family set up the Yellow Barn Development Company and laid out new roads: Corn Crib Road, Spring Run Road, Thresher Place, Top Forty Run, and Foothill Road (some maps mislabeled it Foote Hill Road). Developer Bob Keech, in the mid-1970s, opened Knollwood Road and in the late 1980s on the east side of Yellow Barn Road, Gene Rotunda laid out Bear Circle and Chelsea Circle.

Village of Dryden

Laurence Beach

Village of Dryden Historian

Settlement in the village began in 1797, and it was first called Dryden Corners. When the post office was established in 1811 the name became Dryden. The village was incorporated in 1857.

The earliest named streets in the village were North, South, Main, and Mill. Union and Pleasant Streets were named by Congressman Jeremiah W. Dwight and bordered his farm. Union probably commemorated the Union side during the Civil War. James Street was

named for James Hurd, a carpenter and associate of Dwight, who lived around the corner on East Main.

Library Street was inserted when the Southworth Library was established in 1885, the funds coming from Jennie McGraw to honor her mother and grandfather. Goodrich Way, honoring George E. Goodrich, lawyer, mayor of Dryden, and editor of *The Centennial History of the Town of Dryden* published in 1898, was created in 1991 when the street was developed and a sewer line was run through to it.

Neptune Drive was named in 1976 for the Neptune Hose Company, part of the Dryden Fire Department, but some had petitioned for Willowbrook Drive for the senior housing built nearby. Michael Lane, Dryden lawyer and member of the Tompkins County Legislature, delighted everyone with his limerick about the name:

When some folks built a street up in Dryden
The name they had trouble decidin'.
'Twas 'Willow' at first,
But to 'Neptune' reversed,
No doubt 'twas the will of Poseidon.

Cemetery Avenue originally went to the Greenhill Cemetery hastily created during the Civil War. Robert Baker changed the name in 1951 to Highland Drive and the next year he created Highland Crescent.

Some of the street names are self-explanatory: Mill led to the Old Stone Mill; Lake to Dryden Lake; Hillcrest Drive was on the crest of the hill of the former Monroe farm; Elm Street was named for the elm trees that lined it; Evergreen Street because of Lee Tripp's Christmas tree plantation. Spring House Road, which is Spring Road at one end, was named for the Dryden Springs Hotel purchased in 1862 by Dr. Samantha Niveson, who ran it as a water cure sanatorium.

Some names have been given for personal reasons. The Patch brothers, who came to Dryden from Berkshire, named Berkshire Street in 1972. That year Elmer Goehner named Jay Street for his children because they all had names beginning with the letter J. Lee Road

(established in 1948) and Ray Place (established in 1972) are the names of the sons of Lewis and Jane Terry Gridley, the developers. Hill Place, also developed by the Gridleys in 1972, was named for Ed Hill, who lived on the corner of Lee Road and Hill Place.

In 1976, Robert Shaw added Brookside Drive, Greystone Drive (in 1977) as well as Pebble Drive in 1984. In 1988 Larry Carpenter named Tannery Circle for the old Kennedy Tannery that operated for more than 80 years in the area. Wellsley Drive was named in 1989 for the Wells family. Logan's Run was named in 1986 for the daughter of Mahlon Perkins, a local attorney. Penny Lane, in 1986, was named for Penny Stevens, who owned a lot there.

Many streets in Dryden Village, of course, bear family names, such as, Hilton, Monroe, Pratt, Wall, Marsh, and Rochester. In fact, the Dryden Village President in 1865 and again in 1874 was Rochester Marsh.

Village of Freeville

Joan Manning

Village of Freeville Historian

The first settler in the Village of Freeville was Elder Daniel White who arrived in 1798. He built a home near Fall Creek and constructed a log and stone dam, and also the first gristmill in the Town of Dryden. White's son John constructed a second and larger dam and gristmill upstream in 1833. The growing community was called White's Mill and White's Corner. Elder White, having no desire to perpetuate his name, is said to have proposed the name Freeville. The name was in common use prior to 1836 when it appeared in the charter of the Ithaca and Auburn Railroad. The village developed between the mill near the lower four corners and east to the railroad junction and depot near the upper four corners. The post office was established in Freeville in 1864, and the village was incorporated on July 2, 1887. It is the second

largest village in the Town of Dryden, and it remains the only Freeville in the United States.

A development within the Village of Freeville is named The Crossing on Virgil Creek, situated on the east side of Johnson Street between the Lehigh Valley Railroad bed and Virgil Creek. It is within the village limits. Depot Road leads to it and Tanbark Circle runs through it. It was developed by Harris Dayton on land cut from his farm in the mid-1990s.